

מוסר MUSSAR CENTER

One of the earliest Mussar texts is Pirkei Avot (PEER-kay ah-VOTE, Ethics of the Fathers) which is a Tractate/Masechta in the Mishnah, the earliest Jewish commentary on the Torah. Pirkei Avot 6:6 begins by stating that Torah is greater than the priesthood or kingship because these offices are acquired by 24 and 30 ma'alot respectively but the Torah is acquired by 48, which it then goes on to list. Ma'alot (mah-ah-LOTE) comes from the verb to ascend and has the sense of steps, stages, or levels.

This text doesn't use the word middah explicitly and many of these 48 aren't technically middot as they're quantifiable actions and not abstract qualities, but this list has nonetheless become known as the 48 Mussar Middot. The Mussar Center also offers a comprehensive listing of middot which also number 48 on the [Middot List](#) page at www.mussar.center.

And one more thing. If you enjoy our resources would you exercise the middah of Lev Tov (being a generous, good-hearted person) and make a small donation on the [Donate page](#) page at www.mussar.center to keep us going? Thank you!

שְׁמִיעַת הָאָזְן

Shmiat Ha'Ozen, *SHMEE-it ha-OWES-enn*

Active listening (literally listening of the ear)

אִימָה

Eimah, *ey-MUH*

Awe, fear

עֲרִיכַת שְׁפָתַיִם

Arichat Sfatayim, *ARE-ee-chat sfa-TIE-eem*

Orderly, articulate speech (literally arranged lips)

יִרְאָה

Yirah, *year-UH*

Reverence, respect

בִּינַת הַלֵּב

Binat Ha'Lev, *bee-NUT ha-LEV*

Deep comprehension (literally understanding of the heart)

עֲנוּה

Anavah, *ah-nuh-VUH*

Humility, modesty

שְׁכֻלּוֹת הַלֵּב

Sichlut Ha'Lev, *seech-LOOT ha-LEV*

Deep perception (literally intelligence of the heart)

שִׂמְחָה

Simchah, *seem-CHAH*

Joy, celebration

טָהָרָה

Taharah, *tah-RAH*
Purity, cleanliness

שְׁמוּשׁ חֲכָמִים

Shimush Chachamim, *she-MOOSH*
cha-cha-MEEM
Ministering/being useful to the Sages

דִּקְדּוּק חֲבָרִים

Dikduk Chaverim, *deek-DOOK chav-air-EEM*
Careful choice of friends
Critical give-and-take with colleagues

פִּלְפּוּל הַתְּלָמִידִים

Pilpul Ha'Talmidim, *PILL-pool huh tall-me-DEEM*
Exacting debate with students

יָשׁוּב בַּמִּקְרָא בַּמִּשְׁנָה

Yishuv Ba'Mikrah Ba'Mishnah
yee-SHOOV bah-meek-RUH bah-meesh-NUH
Calm, clear thinking (literally seatedness) in
Written and Oral Torah (literally Scripture and
Repetition)

מְעוּט סְחֹרָה

Miut Skhorah, *mee-OOT s-chor-AH*
Limited business

מְעוּט דֶּרֶךְ אֶרֶץ

Miut Derech Eretz, *mee-OOT DARE-ech AIR-ets*
Minimal secular engagement

מְעוּט תַּעֲנוּג

Miut Taanug, *mee-OOT tah-NOOG*
Limited sexual activity

מְעוּט שֵׁינָה

Miut Shenah, *mee-OOT shea-NAH*
Minimal sleep

מְעוּט שִׁיחָה

Miut Sichah, *me-OOT see-CHAH*
Limited chatting

מְעוּט שְׁחֹק

Miut Skhok, *mee-OOT s-chok*
Minimal frivolity

אֶרֶךְ אַפִּים

Erech Apayim, *AIR-ech up-EYE-eem*
Patience, slowness to anger

לֵב טוֹב

Lev Tov, *lev TOVE*
Being positive (literally a good heart)

אֱמוּנַת חֲכָמִים

Emunat Chachamim
emm-oo-NOT cha-cha-MEEM
Faith in the Sages

קַבֵּלַת הַיְסוּרִין

Kabalat Ha'Yisurin
kah-ball-AHT ha yeess-oo-REEN
Acceptance of suffering

מִכִּיר אֶת מְקוֹמוֹ

Makir Et Mkommo, *mah-KEER et mick-oh-MOE*
Knowing one's place

שִׂמְחַ בְּחֶלְקוֹ

Sameach B'Chelko, *suh-MAY-ach b-chell-KOH*
Being happy with one's lot

עוֹשֶׂה סִיג לְדַבָּרָיו

Oseh Syag Li'Dvarav
oh-SEH see-ogg lid-var-AWE-v
Guarding one's speech (literally making a fence around one's words)

אֵינוֹ מַחְזִיק טוֹבָה לְעַצְמוֹ

Eino Machazik Tovah L'Atzmo
EY-no mah-chah-ZEEK TOVE-uh lots-MOE
Not taking credit (literally not seizing good for oneself)

אֶהוּב

Ahuv, *ah-HOOVE*
Being lovable

אוֹהֵב אֶת הַמָּקוֹם

Ohev Et Ha'Makom, *oh-HEV et ha muck-OME*
Loving the Omnipresent God

אוֹהֵב אֶת הַבְּרִיּוֹת

Ohev Et Ha'Briyot, *oh-HEV et hah bree-OAT*
Loving one's fellow creations

אוֹהֵב אֶת הַצְּדָקוֹת

Ohev Et Ha'Tzdakot, *oh-HEV et huts-dah-COAT*
Loving right actions

אוֹהֵב אֶת הַמִּישָׁרִים

Ohev Et Ha'Meisharim
oh-HEV et ha may-shar-EEM
Loving honest, straightforward communication

אוֹהֵב אֶת הַתּוֹכָחוֹת

Ohev Et Ha'Tochachot
oh-HEV et ha toe-chuh-CHOTE
Loving reproof and rebukes

מִתְרַחֵק מִן הַכְּבוֹד

Mitrachek Min Ha'Kavod
meet-ruh-CHAKE mean ha kuh-VODE
Avoiding public recognition

לֹא מְגִיס לְבוֹ בְּתַלְמוּדוֹ

Lo Megis Libo V'Talmudo
low may-GEESE lee-boe vit-all-moo-DOH
Not being proud of one's learning

אֵינוֹ שִׂמְחָה בְּהוֹרָאָה

Eino Sameach B'Horaah
EY-no suh-MAY-ach b-hora-AH
Not deriving pleasure from rendering legal decisions

נושא בעל עם חברו

Nosey V'Ol Im Chavero

no-SAY v-OLE eem chav-air-OH

Bearing the burden with one's friend

מכריעו לכף זכות

Machrio L'Chaf Zchut

mahch-REE-oh l-chaf z-CHOOT

Judging people favourably, assuming the best

מעמידו על האמת והשלום

Maamido Al Ha'Emet V'Ha'Shalom

mah-ah-me-DOE all ha em-ET v-ha-shuh-LOME

Setting others on the path of truth and peace

מתנישב לבו בתלמודו

Mityashev Libo V'Talmudo

meet-yuh-SHAVE lee-BO v-tall-mood-OH

Concentration on one's studies (literally to seat one's heart)

שואל ומשיב

Shoel U'Meshiv

show-ELL oo-may-SHEEV

Back-and-forth discussion (literally questioning and answering)

שומע ומוסיף

Shomea U'Mosif

show-MAY-ah oo-moe-SEEF

Continuous learning (literally listening and adding)

לומד על מנת ללמד

Lomed Al Mnat L'Lamed

low-MADE all m-not l-LOMM-aid

Studying to teach

לומד על מנת לעשות

Lomed Al Mnat La'asot

low-MADE all m-not lah-us-OAT

Studying to practice

מחכים את רבו

Machkim Et Rabo, *mach-KEEM et rub-OH*

Making one's teacher wiser

מכון את שמועתו

Mchaven Et Shmuato

m-chah-VANE et shmoo-uh-TOE

Intentionally engaging with what one hears

אומר דבר בשם אומרו

Omer Davar B'Shem Omro

OH-mare duh-VARR b-shem ome-ROW

Quoting one's sources (literally saying a thing in the name of the one who said it)